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ABSTRACT

New York City's Transitional Child Care (TCC) program, for families exiting Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), has an application rate of 20 percent. This study sought to determine both the causes of the low rate and possible solutions. The situation was evaluated by means of surveys, interviews, analysis of data collected by the Human Resource Administration, and comparison with other TCC programs nationwide. Two broad streams were inferred as to the cause of the low application rate: structural barriers to application such as a lack of information about TCC, and personal barriers. Based on the results, the following recommendations were made for immediate consideration: (1) improve the TCC mailing list; (2) make income support staff more aware of TCC benefits; (3) give information to those enrolled in AFDC; (4) use a bilingual application form; and (5) increase internal market of TCC. In addition, four recommendations were made for long-term consideration: (1) simplify the application process; (2) reconsider the timing of eligibility determination; (3) develop workshops on transition benefits for AFDC clients; and (4) streamline service delivery. The survey instrument is appended. (Contains 246 references.) (FB)

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The Use of Transitional Child Care: Analysis and Recommendations for New York City's Program

May 1995

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Submitted by

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for the completion of the degree of Master of Public Administration from the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University.

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The authors are completing their Master's degree in Public Administration, concentrating in public policy, at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University. This research project was developed and completed as a final requirement for the degree.

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The Human Resources Administration's Office of Employment Services' Work Related Benefits Unit commissioned this study with a New York University Wagner School student research team to examine the Unit's Transitional Child Care program. The Work Related Benefits Unit was interested in learning about forces that keep New York City's application rate for Transitional Child Care at about 20 percent.

Transitional Child Care offers one year of financial support to cover child care expenses for families who leave AFDC for work. This benefit program is federally mandated under the Family Support Act of 1988. Families who have been on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for at least three of the last six months, that have children age 12 or younger, and whose income falls below the state's cutoff are eligible.

The main goal of this research study is to determine why the New York City Transitional Child Care program's application rate is so low and how this rate can be increased. Research methods included literature reviews, interviews, and administrative and survey data collection and analysis. Our findings include an examination of HRA's Income Support procedures, the eligible population and other Transitional Child Care programs nationwide.

To begin, through our research we found that HRA's Income Support staff were unclear about features and benefits of Transitional Child Care. Although they were enthusiastic about similar benefits offered through the BEGIN job training program, they were unaware of the details of transitional benefits.

Next, we were able to describe the population leaving welfare for work in New York City. Ninety percent of cases are headed by women, cases have an average of 2.1 children, and 29 percent of cases have been on AFDC more than once within the past five years. We also learned that those who applied and those who did not apply for Transitional Child Care were similar, with two exceptions: applicants had been on AFDC an average of eight months longer than those who did not apply for Transitional Child Care (43.2 months within the past five years compared to 35.2 months), and applicants had a marginally lower rate of return to AFDC.

A survey of this population provided additional information. The average income of survey respondents is $933.14 per month. The case head works an average of 32.1 hours per week and pays an average of $68.76 per week for child care. The survey also solicited respondents' opinions about their

experiences with HRA and its Transitional Child Care program. Respondents who had received Transitional Child Care spoke highly about the program, emphasizing not only that without it they would not have been able to pay for child care but also that the programs support enabled them to stay employed.

In addition, by researching other state, county and municipal Transitional Child Care programs, we learned that other areas have successfully increased participation rates by instituting service and marketing innovations. These innovations include shortening or eliminating the application form for Transitional Child Care, encouraging caseworkers through feedback and incentives to promote program use, and informing clients about the program's features and benefits. These innovations are not complex and could be modified for implementation in New York City to increase the number of people who can benefit from Transitional Child Care, ideally decreasing dependence on public assistance over time.

Based on our findings, we developed a series of recommendations which build on HRA's existing structure and procedures. By refining its administrative processes, improving its marketing efforts, and training service staff, HRA can easily increase the number of people it serves through Transitional Child Care. First, refining its administrative processes involves simplifying the application, improving the application's distribution, moving the approval process forward, and streamlining service delivery. Next, internal marketing efforts include keeping Income Support staff up-to-date on Transitional Child Care, ensuring that they are knowledgeable about the program. External marketing involves making better use of existing flyers by posting them in Income Support sites and other locales where clients can see them, distributing information on Transitional Child Care to AFDC clients at their first recertification, and developing workshops to educate clients about benefits available to them in the transition from AFDC to work. Finally, training Income Support staff who have direct contact with clients would also improve application rates.

Most of these suggestions for increasing the application rate are reasonable, given on-going resource limitations. Implementing some of these changes would advance the ability of the Transitional Child Care program to help families seeking financial independence. In order to reach transitional benefits' goal of keeping people off public assistance, the program must reach the population in need of support.

BACKGROUND

The National Law Center's 1993 Report on Homelessness and Poverty notes that, in 63 percent of cities it surveyed, the market cost of having two children in day care exceeds the total earnings from one full-time, minimum-wage job.[1] How does a single parent hold down a full-time job when affordable child care is so scarce? Most often the alternative for such families is public assistance through Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). This bleak choice faces first time AFDC recipients in addition to those who have been on public assistance before but have not been able to stay off.

Seven years ago, the U.S. Congress overhauled the welfare system on the premise that people on public assistance needed more than handouts to become independent. They needed a helping hand in securing and maintaining a job in order to stay on the path to financial self-sufficiency. Under the Family Support Act of 1988 — sponsored by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) — states must provide one year of subsidized child care and medical benefits to welfare recipients who become employed outside of the home. These transitional benefits are intended to serve as an additional boost for families attempting to make the transition from welfare to work.

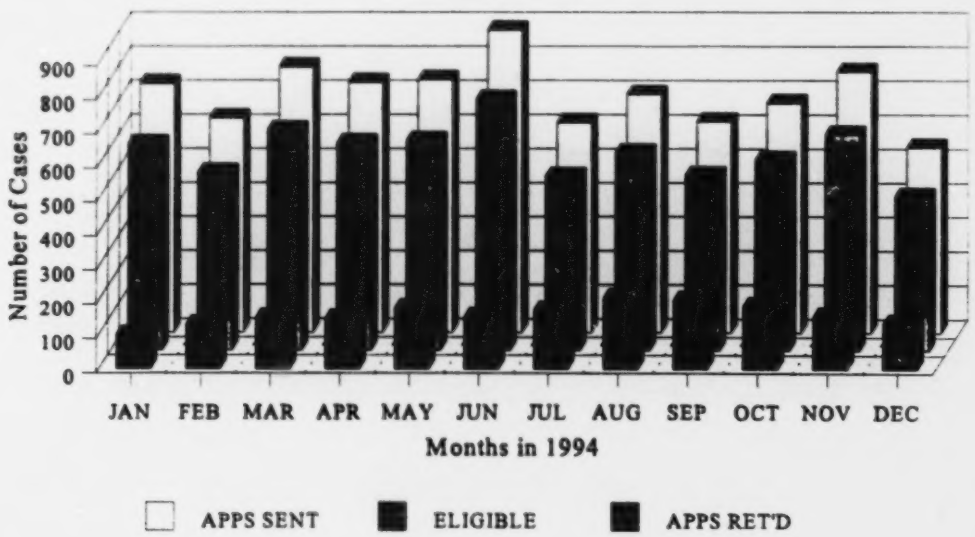
While many states, New York included, had some version of transitional benefits in place before 1988, the federal mandate designed a set of common rules and guidelines for them. Under the federal mandate, in order to be eligible for Transitional Child Care, a family must have been on AFDC for three of the last six months, and the reason for case termination must be related to increased earnings. The family can receive a subsidy for the care of a child age 12 or younger (or older if the child is disabled or under court-ordered supervision). The federal mandate requires an application process, but the format depends on state policies and procedures. Other federal stipulations state that families must share in the cost of care according to their ability to pay, and that the sliding scale established by states for this copayment must place an upper limit on the income level of families that can receive assistance. States have the option of conducting periodic income reviews of benefit recipients.[2]

While some programs have received waivers to bypass some of these regulations, New York City closely follows the federal mandate. In New York State, welfare provisions are implemented by the Department of Social Services

(DSS), which oversees local offices statewide. Although most local DSS offices service only one county, New York City's local DSS serves five. In New York City, the local DSS is called the Human Resources Administration (HRA), a city agency that encompasses a wide array of services and programs in all five boroughs of New York City. HRA's Income Support offices distribute public assistance funds. HRA's Office of Employment Services (OES) — operating under the charge of the Family Support Act of 1988 — holds job training programs for people on public assistance and administers transitional health and child care benefits to people who have recently left AFDC for work. Within OES, the Work Related Benefits Unit oversees these transitional benefits.

Like many state and local Transitional Child Care administrators, the Work Related Benefits Unit has found that response to the program is low, despite the program's incentive to help people become independent. According to HRA data, only about 20 percent of those eligible for the program return the application. The following chart shows the number of AFDC cases that closed in each month of 1994 for employment reasons and the number of Transitional Child Care applications returned. The gaping difference between the two warrants the exploration that we have undertaken at the request of the Work Related Benefits Unit.

Figure One: Applications Sent, Estimated Eligibility & Applications Returned

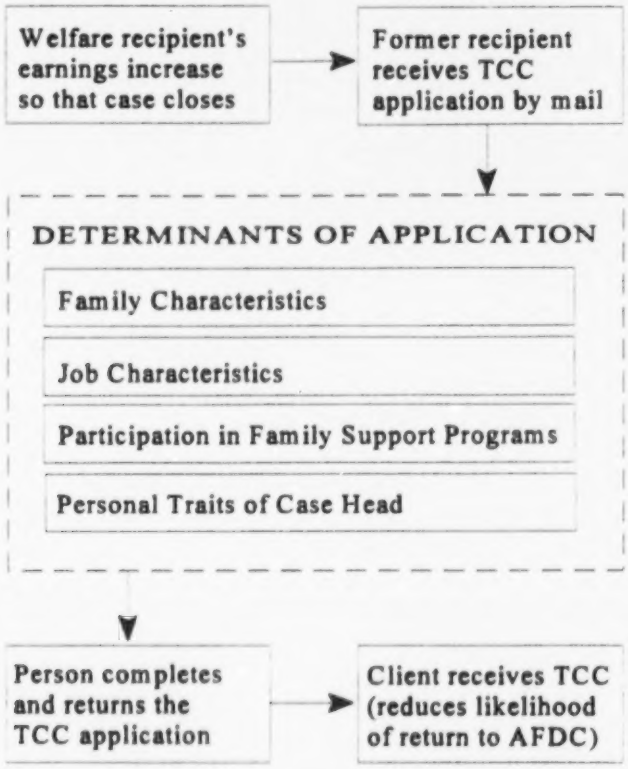


We began our analysis of TCC with a review of participation rate data and found that the actual gap between potentially eligible clients and applications received is slightly smaller, because within the group of people who are sent applications, some are ineligible. Our research shows that the youngest child in 13.1 percent of cases sent applications is age 13 or older, thereby making these families ineligible for TCC. We also found that about four percent of cases included no children, again making them ineligible. The center column in the chart above reflects the more accurate difference between eligible clients and those who applied. If we assume that about 83 percent of those sent applications is a better estimate of the eligible population, then the application rate is about 27 percent, still relatively low.

Transitional Child Care's low utilization rate keeps the program from fully helping the former welfare population as a whole to reach self-sufficiency. Underutilization of Transitional Child Care raises questions about access to, information about, and understanding of the program, its features and its potential benefits. The low application rate is problematic because public officials and program administrators believe that financial assistance with child care costs can bolster former AFDC recipients' chances of becoming fully self-sufficient.

Based on field research, the causal model that follows details the relationships that are assumed to underlie receipt of transitional benefits.

Figure Two: Simplified Causal Model


Welfare recipient's earnings increase so that case closes
Former recipient receives TCC application by mail
DETERMINANTS OF APPLICATION
Family Characteristics
Job Characteristics
Participation in Family Support Programs
Personal Traits of Case Head
Person completes and returns the TCC application
Client receives TCC (reduces likelihood of return to AFDC)

The table that follows supplies more detailed information on the determinants of application as laid out in the preceding causal model:

Table One: Details of Causal Model Categories

Family Characteristics	Job Characteristics
status on family support programs total # in family # of children ages of children family income	salary/wages access to health insurance scheduling/hours stability of job

Support Programs	Personal Traits
Aid to Families with Dependent Children Transitional Child Care Transitional Medicaid/ Medicaid Food Stamps Housing Assistance subsidized care	demographic traits (age, race, *etc.*) education level primary language ability to perform job motivation to remain employed prior time on public assistance tendency to apply

With an understanding of the problem, the intervention, New York City's current application rate, and the causal assumptions, we can now discuss our chosen method of seeking answers to the research question: Why do only 20 percent of those sent an application for Transitional Child Care return it?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section discusses our project's objectives and our research design and methodology.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The overall goal of this study is to determine why the proportion of people who apply for Transitional Child Care in New York City is only about 20 percent. There are three key objectives to this study:

- *To investigate why people who are sent applications respond or do not respond to the offer for Transitional Child Care and determine how New York City might boost its application rate based on these findings.*
- *To develop a picture of both the individuals who leave AFDC for work as well as the process by which they leave AFDC.*
- *To explore other state, county and municipal Transitional Child Care programs, provide a synthesis of what is being done elsewhere, and offer suggestions for what may be adapted to New York City's program.*

Meeting these objectives is important to New York City's Work Related Benefits Unit and to the community at large, due to the increasing number of people receiving welfare. Between 1989 and 1993, AFDC caseloads in New York City grew by 60 percent while general financial pressures on states and municipalities grew as well.[3] Answers to these questions are also important to

current, and more importantly, to future participants in the Transitional Child Care program. Getting access to the benefits may provide parents leaving AFDC with a better chance to remain in the workforce with minimal governmental financial support.

In addition, the results of this project may serve to increase understanding about one aspect of the many forces that affect parents who leave AFDC for work. In the broader social science context, even the 1992 U.S. General Accounting Office study on transitional benefits stated that there were serious gaps in the knowledge about how these benefits impact needy parents.

More recently, Urban Institute researchers, Pamela Loprest and Douglas Wissoker, have undertaken a study to try and identify the actual effects of transitional benefits. They have found that in Washington and Massachusetts states, the effect of Transitional Child Care on employment retention is insignificant. They state that "financial help alone does not seem to make a difference in allowing parents to retain jobs."[4] Their research suggests that lack of knowledge about transitional benefits among potentially eligible clients seems to dampen the benefits' impact. Nevertheless, in welfare reform scenarios "where a large segment of the AFDC caseload will be working, the role of subsidized child care needs to be considered further."[5] With many states still examining the effects of these programs of their respective welfare populations, the verdict is still out on how transitional benefits affect parents leaving welfare for work. Although measuring the effects of transitional benefits is both interesting and important, our study focuses on New York City's application rate.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

We carried out three main studies in order to gain insight into New York City's low rate of application for Transitional Child Care: we examined Income Support case closing processes and practices; we studied the application response rate through administrative and survey data analyses; and we conducted a comparative policy analysis.

CASE CLOSING STUDY OVERVIEW

Income Support Eligibility Specialists oversee, and finally, close the cases of people receiving AFDC. If people leave AFDC for work, their case closure code should indicate employment, in which case their names and addresses are

forwarded to the Work Related Benefits Unit. These cases are then sent a TCC application and further information about the program. To better understand the nuances of this process, we targeted Income Support staff and a subset of former AFDC recipients to interview.

First, we conducted six interviews with HRA Income Support staff from one site, including a Center-Based Trainer, a Supervisor and four Eligibility Specialists. We expected that this part of the study would help us to understand the case closing process as well as the role that transitional benefits, particularly Transitional Child Care, play in this process.

Next, to build a sample of former AFDC recipients, we selected 15 cases (those known as "green dot" cases) from active TCC files based on the fact that these individuals:

- were employed when they left AFDC;
- did not have their cases closed with an employment code (and therefore the Work Related Benefits Unit did not automatically send them a TCC application); and
- obtained a TCC application somehow (outside of normal procedure) and applied for TCC.

We also selected seven OES3-A cases. This means that:

- at some point prior to case closure the client filed an OES3-A form (one that indicates that she or he had found employment);
- the case's closing code does not reflect employment; and
- the client did not apply for Transitional Child Care.

With this pool of 22 cases, we hoped to connect with three or four to understand how their cases closed and if, when, and how they first learned about Transitional Child Care.

Unfortunately, we were unable to complete this part of our study because many of these cases had no telephone numbers (either listed with HRA or with the local phone company) or they had out-of-service phone numbers. We found that others were unavailable, despite multiple attempts, due to erratic work hours. In the one case where the client's listed phone was in order, the client resided there and was available to interview, a language barrier prevented us from completing the survey. Therefore, our findings and recommendations that deal with the case closing process come exclusively from interviews with Income Support staff.

APPLICATION RESPONSE
STUDY OVERVIEW

This section of our project focused most directly on the individuals who were eligible for TCC, based on their AFDC case closing code and the age of

their children. We undertook both an analysis of HRA administrative data and an analysis of survey data.

We collected administrative data from the HRA computer information system on all cases that closed during August and October 1994 for employment reasons (see Appendix A for details). We selected a random sample of 110 of these cases and collected more detailed data on them: case closing code, whether or not the case head applied for TCC, the number of children, the age of youngest and oldest child on the case, gender and age of the case head, number and gender of adults listed on the case, number of adults in the household, and finally, the total number of months that the family had been on public assistance within the past five years.

In addition to our analysis of administrative data, we developed and sent a survey to the sample members. The sample consisted of 52 of those who had not returned the TCC application and 58 of those who had returned it. These numbers overrepresent the total number of those who had applied for Transitional Child Care. We believed this approach was necessary, based on the low application rate for TCC, because we wanted a large enough number of responses from applicants to determine if statistically significant differences between applicants and nonapplicants exist.

The survey packet included a cover letter, noting the reason for the study and offering a financial incentive in the form of Burger King gift certificates, as well as the four page survey (see Appendix B). We pretested the survey on three participants in BEGIN, a job training program for AFDC recipients. In addition, two professors from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service who have done extensive survey research reviewed and helped modify the instrument. There were concerns that the survey's reading level would be too advanced for some sample members, so we made every effort to make the survey readable and brief.

Where phone numbers existed, we contacted those who did not respond to the initial mailing, and then resent the survey to the balance of the sample. We sent survey respondents a thank you letter with the incentive gift certificates.

We analyzed data from these two sources to determine what the main features of the overall population are in addition to identifying whether differences exist between those who apply for TCC and those who do not.

COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

We contacted a variety of organizations to obtain additional information on how other states, counties and municipalities structure and implement their Transitional Child Care programs. We reviewed information from reports, publications, phone conversations and personal interviews, synthesizing it to get a sense of what happens in other areas and to develop recommendations for New York City's Transitional Child Care program.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

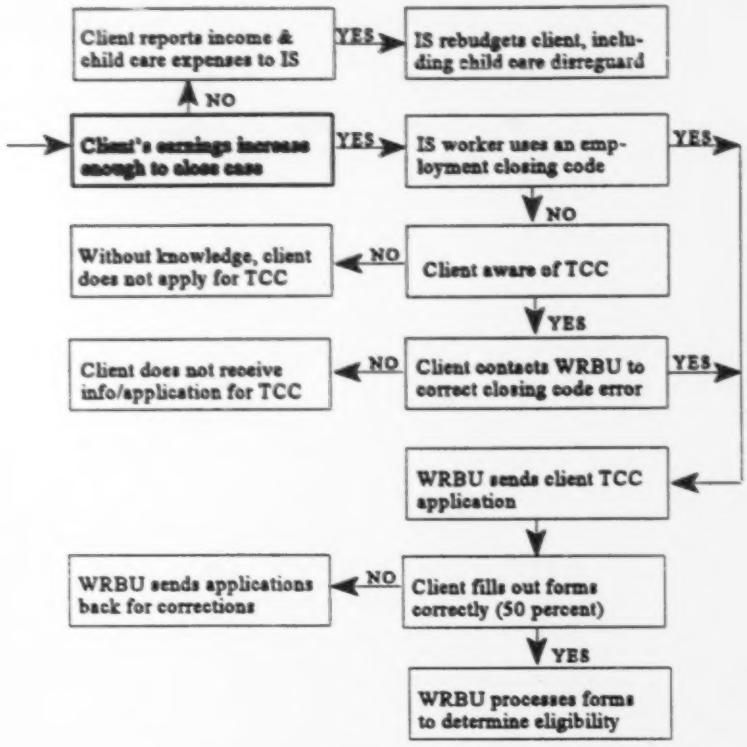
This section details the research results from each of the three parts of our study: the case closing process, application response, and comparative policy analysis.

CASE CLOSING PROCESS

When AFDC cases close because of a parent's increased earnings, the Work Related Benefits Unit is notified. One of several employment codes that Income Support workers use flags these cases, indicating the names and addresses of about 700 people each month who then are sent an application for Transitional Child Care. Immediately upon receiving the weekly list of potentially eligible cases, the Work Related Benefits Unit sends a congratulatory letter (see Appendix C) to each of these families, lauding them for leaving welfare and taking a step toward financial independence. A week or so later, these families are sent an application packet, which includes details of TCC eligibility criteria and several forms to be filled out (see Appendix C). This link between case closing and notification of Transitional Child Care is an important one, one that requires a closer look if we are to determine what might boost the application rate.

To understand the case closing process and how it results in the Work Related Benefits Unit's notification of eligible clients, refer to the following operational model.

Figure Three: Operational Model - Case Closing and TCC Notification


Client reports income & child care expenses to IS
YES
IS rebudgets client, including child care disregard
NO
Client's earnings increase enough to close case
YES
IS worker uses an employment closing code
YES
NO
Without knowledge, client does not apply for TCC
NO
Client aware of TCC
YES
Client does not receive info/application for TCC
NO
Client contacts WRBU to correct closing code error
YES
WRBU sends client TCC application
WRBU sends applications back for corrections
NO
Client fills out forms correctly (50 percent)
YES
WRBU processes forms to determine eligibility

INCOME SUPPORT STAFF

To better understand the case closing process, we interviewed several Income Support staff, both managers and Eligibility Specialists. While Income Support workers have heavy caseloads (about 200 clients each), overall they seem upbeat about their responsibilities and the potential impact they can have on the lives of the people they serve. One Eligibility Specialist describes the job as "trying to keep them with the lights on and not putting them out in the street."[6] Another stated, "I love my job, so that makes it a bit easier for me." A third emphasized that "we're here to help motivate them, to make them self-independent."

Although it is not policy to follow-up with clients once their cases are closed, some workers suggest that it might be helpful to know how clients fare once they leave public assistance. Knowing that their clients are able to keep their jobs and become independent is satisfying. Nevertheless, one Eligibility Specialist suggested that not all Income Support staff look at the big picture,

which involves working to ease clients off public assistance through referrals to job training, educational, and transitional support programs.

A myriad of circumstances affects how the case of a person on AFDC might close; likewise, there are several ways a person might learn about the benefits of Transitional Child Care. A client can request that her or his case be closed for reasons such as a move out of state, marriage or employment. If a client misses a scheduled meeting with her or his Income Support worker, or if a client's earnings exceed a certain level, the case will close. HRA units other than Income Support also have authority to close AFDC cases: entry into drug treatment, an unfavorable Food Stamps review, or noncompliance with Office of Employment Services requirements can result in case closure. Ideally, a client's Income Support worker would notify her or him about the benefits of receiving Transitional Child Care at case closing, or before, but for a variety of reasons this does not always happen.

One Income Support worker stated that "since the training in June 1990" he has had no contact with the Work Related Benefits Unit. He continued by saying,

> Transitional benefits . . . is an excellent benefit for any individual trying to get off of welfare because it gives an incentive to stay off . . . I always try to insist they go into these programs . . . The person is already in a financial hardship and transitional benefits is really helpful to them.

While workers believe the benefits are valuable, they believe that "every so often we need retraining on transitional benefits." Furthermore, "if the workers are not trying to push it," one stated, "clients may not know about it." Income Support staff suggests that some workers push participation in transitional benefits more than others. With more information, "you would find a lot more clients trying to get transitional benefits."

One area of confusion among Income Support staff is the distinction between BEGIN and receipt of Transitional Child Care. When asked about how Transitional Child Care fits into Income Support's case closing procedures, one person discussed requirements for entry into BEGIN and another suggested that only BEGIN participants know about transitional benefits. One staff member asserted that if there are support programs for people once they leave public assistance, they were not aware of them: "We're not involved in that . . . Once they're able to maintain our minimal standards, we're done . . . We're dealing strictly with a procedure, [and] we're not responsible for anything else."

Encouraging those Income Support workers who view public assistance as part of a larger process to help people reach self-sufficiency to continue to hold this view, and educating others about the implications of looking at it as such, might be a sound first step in enhancing the rate of application to Transitional Child Care. It seems that more frequent education on the unique attributes of and requirements for Transitional Child Care would remedy current misunderstanding of the program.

FORMER AFDC RECIPIENTS

In addition to interviewing Income Support staff, we also wanted to interview some former AFDC recipients to understand the case closing process from their perspective and to find out if, when and how they learned about Transitional Child Care. As stated in our section on methodology, severe problems in communicating by phone with this population prevented us from getting the client perspective on the case closing process.

Because of the lack of information from this part of our study, we recommend that HRA undertake additional research, first to get the client perspective, and second to determine the size of the overall eligible population.

APPLICATION RESPONSE

While looking at the case closing process provides a framework for our discussion of Transitional Child Care by placing the program within an institution and its operations, taking a closer look at the population and the application for Transitional Child Care reveals other determinants of the application rate. We analyzed HRA administrative data for baseline measures and then conducted a survey to collect more detailed information.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Conducting an analysis of a random sample of 110 AFDC cases that closed for employment reasons during two selected months in 1994 enables us to describe the overall population as well as the two subpopulations of interest, *i.e.* those who applied for Transitional Child Care and those who did not.

Within our sample, 16.1 percent of cases closed because of the father's increased earnings (code 26), 78.4 percent because of the mother's increased earnings (code 27 or 31), and 5.5 percent because of the case head's increased earnings (code 56). Regarding the length of time these families had been on public assistance within the past five years, 17.3 percent had been on AFDC up

to one year, 10.9 percent had been on between one and two years, 11.8 percent between two and three years, 20 percent between three and four years, and 40 percent for four years or more.

Table Two: Profile of Families Who Have Left AFDC for Work

FAMILY PROFILE	
90 percent of case heads are female case head's age averages 31½ years case averages 2.1 children youngest child's age averages 4½ years oldest child's age averages 11½ years 60 percent of cases include only children age four and younger 61 percent of cases have been on AFDC only once (within the past five years) ⅛ of closed cases are re-opened within seven months	
TCC APPLICANTS had been on AFDC for 43.2 months* 24.5 percent are back on AFDC†	NONAPPLICANTS had been on AFDC for 35.2 months* 34.6 percent are back on AFDC†

* statistically significant, $p<.10$, two-tailed test

† not a statistically significant difference

An interesting finding is that applicants had been on public assistance average of eight months longer than those who did not apply. A variety of hypotheses might explain this difference. For example, one might suggest that people who have been on public assistance longer are more used to the types of forms they need to fill out, have become accustomed to the process, and are not uncomfortable seeking continued support. The other difference that we identified between applicants and nonapplicants is the rate of return to AFDC. While this ten percentage point difference is not statistically significant for our sample, we expect that with a larger sample size it might be.

As a side bar, while our study focuses on differences between applicants and nonapplicants, we identified an interesting difference between TCC recipients and nonrecipients. Among those who received Transitional Child Care, the rate of return to AFDC was 12.9 percent after seven months; and among those who did not receive it, the rate of return was 35.1 percent. While this difference is statistically significant ($p<.05$, two-tailed test), it does not confirm a causal relationship. Only an experimental evaluation of TCC that reveals similar findings would indicate a causal relationship between receipt of TCC and ability to stay off AFDC. Our finding does not support such causality.

We also identified differences between cases headed by men and those headed by women. For instance, the difference between female and male heads

of cases in terms of their prior time on public assistance is statistically significant. The average length of time on AFDC for women is 41.6 months within the past five years, while for men it is 19.8 months. Women are also more likely than men to have other adults living in the home with them; and men are slightly less likely to apply for Transitional Child Care. While gender differences are not the focus of our study, these differences are interesting to note, given the overall composition of the population as well as the TCC application rate.

One surprising finding is that the number and age of children and the number of adults on the case or in the home are not statistically significant determinants of likelihood to return the application, nor is the number of times a family was on and off public assistance in the past five years. Similarly, there is no difference in the application return rate between families in which the children are under age five and those families that have only school-aged children.

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

The administrative data provided us with a picture both of the general population leaving welfare for work and a picture of the groups that did and did not submit applications for Transitional Child Care. For more detailed information about a person's likelihood to return the TCC application, we surveyed our random sample of 110 cases that closed for employment reasons during 1994.

The overall survey return rate was 30 percent. However, 41.4 percent of TCC applicants completed and returned our survey while 15.4 percent of nonapplicants returned it. Furthermore, only 1.7 percent of the surveys we sent to those who had applied for TCC were returned to us as undeliverable by the post office. In contrast, the post office returned as undeliverable a full 13.5 percent of the surveys we sent to those who had not applied for TCC.

These survey results indicate survey nonresponse bias on two levels. First, Transitional Child Care applicants were more likely to return our survey, and those who did not send back the TCC application were less likely to send back our survey; therefore, our analysis is skewed toward TCC applicants. Next, the relatively high rate at which the post office returned nonapplicant surveys as undeliverable leads us to believe that this is a more unstable subpopulation than the group that applied for TCC. We did not attempt to measure personal tendency to fill out a survey or application, or level and type of instability, but

our survey experiences indicate that they are important determinants of a person's likelihood to apply for Transitional Child Care.

We also believe that our survey findings reflect a third type of nonresponse bias. In an attempt to increase our response rate, we conducted some follow-up by phone. In this process it became evident that a language barrier may have prevented some sample members from completing and returning our survey, which may parallel this subpopulation's difficulty with the TCC application.

It is important to understand these nonresponse biases when considering the aggregate results from our survey data analysis. The information that follows pertains only to those that sent back our survey; therefore it is not generalizable to the entire population. In contrast, the statistics from the administrative data analysis are generalizable.

Table Three: Family Profile of Survey Respondents

FAMILY PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS
case head works an average of 32.1 hours per week
the average gross personal income is $933.14 per month
the average gross household income is $1,085.86 per month
•
46.9 percent speak English as their primary language
28.1 percent speak Spanish as their primary language
21.9 percent note that English/Spanish is their primary language
•
12.5 percent finished college
25 percent have completed some college
28.1 percent finished high school or earned a GED
21.9 percent have completed some high school
9.4 percent have not completed eighth grade
•
37.5 percent and Black
56.3 percent are Hispanic
the rest classify their race as "other"
•
68.8 percent are still working
51.6 percent received TCC at some point since case closure
20 percent of survey respondents have returned to AFDC
•
average child care cost is $68.76 per week
21.9 percent say their child care is inexpensive or very inexpensive
78.1 percent would not change their child care situation in they could

Although the people who responded to the survey do not fully reflect the entire population, it is interesting nevertheless to look at their responses to questions that solicited their opinions:

- 43.8 percent record that their experiences with HRA have been positive or very positive, while 31.3 percent record that they have been negative or very negative (25 percent did not answer the question).
- 65.6 percent were excited about their job when their AFDC case closed, and 53.1 percent said they were determined to keep their job.
- 9.4 percent noted that they were confident about meeting the needs of their family, while 50 percent said they were worried about meeting the needs of their family when their AFDC case closed.
- 50 percent said they were worried about finding child care, and 56.3 percent said they were worried about paying for child care when their AFDC case closed.
- Regarding the application, 81.3 percent said it was easy to read, 78.1 percent said it was easy to fill out and 71.9 percent said they understood the information they received about TCC.
- 44.9 percent of survey respondents said they had heard about TCC before receiving the application in the mail. Clearly this statistic is higher among survey respondents (who overwhelmingly applied for TCC) than it would be in the general population.

Loprest and Wissoker suggest that Transitional Child Care recipients in Washington state and Massachusetts make slightly different arrangements for the care of their children, more often using licensed care.[7] Among our survey respondents, which include both TCC recipients and nonrecipients, child care situations breakdown as follows:

- 68.8 percent use an unlicensed provider to care for children in the recipient's home or in another person's home
- 15.6 percent use a relative (who is an unlicensed provider) to care for children in the relative's home
- 3.1 percent use a licensed provider to care for children in another person's home
- 18.8 percent have their children in a day care center
- 6.3 percent make other arrangements (such as reliance on after school programs) for the care of their children

These numbers add up to more than 100 percent because parents with more than one child may use more than one type of child care.

We had hoped to describe the reasons people have for not returning the TCC application, but because of the small number of nonapplicants returning our survey, these results are inconclusive.

Several survey respondents who have received Transitional Child Care made comments about HRA and its TCC program:

> The Transitional Child Care worker assigned to me is very helpful, professional and most of all polite. Most HRA workers act as if they don't like their job, welfare recipients are second class citizens, and workers are misinformed about programs to get women out of welfare. Very discouraging.
> — Female, age 31

> The only thing to make the Transitional Child Care program a little better is that if it continues to help those who need it for as long as they need help. I work for $6 an hour, and the way the economy is going, after 1 year I still will be making $6 an hour and unable to pay for child care. But I would hate to quit my job because it pays only $6 and I can't afford child care any longer.
> — Female, age 29

> I am very happy to [have] participated in the Transitional Child Care program. Without this program I couldn't afford to pay [for] child care.
> — Female, age 24

> The Transitional Child Care program has help[ed] me a lot because without it I could not afford the $36.00 a week they help me pay. I don't make that much at all. After paying my rent and bills, there's not much left.
> — Female, age 36

> I like this program a lot because it help[s] me to pay for my son's care while I work. I feel very happy because I could support my family. I hope things never change.
> — Female, age 33

Combining our administrative data and survey analyses offers depth and breadth to understanding the important issues facing the Transitional Child Care program in its effort to enhance the number of clients it serves.

COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS

Like New York City, other state, county and municipal Transitional Child Care programs have suffered from low utilization. As a result, some of these areas have instituted innovative processes and initiatives in attempts to increase their rates. Focusing on these initiatives offers insight into what New York City

can do to enhance participation in its Transitional Child Care program. Acknowledging the differences in the volume and types of clients served by these respective programs, we believe that these areas' initiatives can at least suggest routes that the Work Related Benefits Unit can pursue to raise its application rates.

The importance of studying other areas' TCC implementation practices should not be understated. After contacting various agencies, child advocacy organizations, child care experts, and academics nationwide, we were able to identify two common themes: first, service delivery improvements are essential to raising application rates, and second, marketing Transitional Child Care is crucial to its success.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENTS

All organizations, whether public or private, exist to provide quality services to clients. It is tantamount to the success of the organization that it deliver these services efficiently. Service delivery changes implemented in other areas that provide transitional benefits include case management (administrative) streamlining, and simplification of the TCC application process.

- STREAMLINING FOR A SMOOTHER TRANSITION

To begin, streamlining the current processes of administering Transitional Child Care smoothes the transition from AFDC to TCC, thereby increasing application and participation rates. In Utah, for example, there is one child care system, and when a client leaves AFDC for work, she or he does not have to apply for TCC benefits. The original AFDC caseworker — in Utah referred to as a "self-sufficiency worker" — stays on the case. Because this worker already knows about the case's circumstances, the transition from welfare to work and receipt of Transitional Child Care is much easier.[8] When one office handles the case, breakdowns in communication occur less frequently, improving service operations and the chance that the client will receive the TCC benefit. Similarly, in Salem, Oregon, streamlined and integrative administrative practices have substantially raised utilization rates in recent years.[9]

Another streamlining innovation considers the use of outside organizations. Nassau County, New York contracts out to nonprofit organizations, which serves to smoothe the change from AFDC to employment because the nonprofit caseworker is assigned to the client on a long-term basis and has a responsibility for that client's well-being. Throughout the length of time on public assistance, the assigned caseworker repeatedly informs and educates the client about the

benefits of applying for Transitional Child Care. Furthermore, from the beginning of the client's involvement with a job training program, the caseworker helps the client to fill out the TCC application, saves it for the client, and then submits the application to the county's TCC unit at the appropriate time. The lag period between case closure and receipt of TCC is often reduced or eliminated by starting the application process for transitional benefits early.[10]

Nassau County is also moving toward a more cohesive system by instituting several new processes, one of which is "presumptive eligibility." Under this system, the public assistance caseworker has the power to authorize TCC payments several weeks before the client would normally receive them if the person were to apply only after case closure. In this way, the lag period that usually occurs is reduced, and breaks in service are avoided at a time when the client's employment situation is most vulnerable.[11]

Monroe County, New York has also undertaken efforts to streamline its service delivery processes. County administrators attribute their 50 percent increase in rates of utilization since mid- 1994 to their "multiple points of client access" system.[12] This system establishes four points of entry for clients wishing to access TCC. These four points are in Temporary Assistance (Income Maintenance), Comprehensive Employment Opportunity Service Center (CEOSC), Child Assistance Program (CAP), and Services Day Care. Caseworkers in each of these sections determine their own clients' TCC eligibility status and help them apply for benefits. TCC cases opened by Temporary Assistance, CEOSC and CAP are transferred to the Services Day Care Team, which assumes responsibility for confirming eligibility, on-going payment, processing changes and recertification. "Establishing multiple points of entry has provided clients with ready access to transitional services. In addition, since determining TCC eligibility is part of the case closing process, breaks in service are avoided. The availability of TCC through the Services Day Care Team provides a 'safety net' to catch those families who slip by other entry points."[13] Monroe County officials praise this system and credit their increased utilization rates largely to its implementation.

- EASIER APPLICATION PROCESS

A second way in which states and localities have attempted to improve service delivery is with the development and use of an easier application process. Four states have moved toward shortening or eliminating the written request form for transitional benefits. Massachusetts and Texas do not require written applications. Furthermore, in Texas clients access care through local or

toll-free telephone service. Vermont has instituted a system that resembles Nassau County's presumptive eligibility process, whereby the state does not require "a written application for families that meet basic eligibility criteria. Instead, the agency presumes there is a request for TCC and instructs the family to notify the agency if it does not request TCC. Lack of notification by the family is interpreted as a request for TCC."[14] These simplified application processes are more likely to ensure that a family gets rapid access to necessary services.

Those states using written applications should make the form short and clear. In Mississippi, for example, families apply for TCC by signing a one-sentence statement at the bottom of a notice sent to those leaving AFDC. Moreover, Monroe County has begun to use a one-page application, and administrators believe that the shorter application has symbolic meaning for clients: they are no longer on public assistance, which some believe carries a heavy stigma.[15]

Most of the officials and child care advocates we interviewed stressed that agencies should ensure that the TCC application does not ask for information already in their records. Mississippi's one-sentence application, for instance, exemplifies this simple yet effective approach. Since cases have been established previously, and data has been already entered into the agency's computer network, the office has already documented the household composition, wages, and other income data.

> Under no circumstances . . . should the agency require information that does not change over time and that is already in the agency's possession . . . [TCC case] workers should be instructed to request verification from families only for those factors for which there is no information or verification in the files, the information is out of date, or the information has changed.[16]

Through Monroe County's multiple points of access system, clients are able to apply for TCC without making additional phone calls or appointments, or waiting for an application to arrive by mail. Clients need not provide information that duplicates what they have already given their caseworkers. By requesting information existing in databases, the application is more cumbersome for both caseworkers and clients.

Several advocacy groups and TCC administrators believe that verbal communication is an effective tool by which to reach this population; therefore, notifying clients often and early regarding their potential eligibility for TCC can be a successful method to increase rates.

MARKETING TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE

Not only service delivery improvements but also external and internal marketing are crucial to raising TCC utilization rates. External marketing involves high-quality advertising and strong verbal communication to "get the word out." Internal marketing consists of "selling" the program to caseworkers and other involved parties, through the use of training, feedback, and incentives.

- EXTERNAL MARKETING

Several states, counties, municipalities, and advocacy organizations have developed eye-catching, clear, yet not overwhelming posters and flyers that are posted and distributed in places that service the client population. These locales can include government institutions, day care centers, religious or community organizations, and agency sites. In addition, Monroe County's public assistance staff constitutes a "speakers' bureau, and these speakers attend meetings of community organizations to publicize the availability of transitional services to assist individuals who are leaving public assistance."[17] In Iowa, caseworkers market TCC to prospective clients by "stressing the way in which TCC benefits, combined with Transitional Medicaid, help to maximize family income. Workers discuss with parents the specific amounts that are available through TCC, an approach the state agency believes has been effective."[18] Furthermore, caseworkers in Hawaii identify and outreach to clients through the use of a "monthly computer-generated list of all cases closed due to earned income. Income maintenance workers who process TCC requests use this report to identify and provide outreach to families who have not applied for the benefit."[19] If caseworkers are to be a vehicle for external marketing to clients, it is important that internal marketing be directed at them.

- INTERNAL MARKETING

Internal marketing is just as important to TCC's success as is external marketing, if not more so. Educating AFDC caseworkers about the benefits of Transitional Child Care, as well as about how the program is administered, is crucial to maintaining high utilization rates. Several states have recognized that not only positive caseworker attitudes but also feedback and incentives are excellent tools. In Monroe County,

> workers realize that in the long term they personally benefit because families are more likely to avoid future dependency, thus reducing caseloads. Income maintenance workers receive frequent feedback regarding their efforts to increase utilization

> of TCC. This feedback takes a variety of forms including charts and memos highlighting current achievements. Annually, the agency presents an award to the income maintenance team with the highest number of referrals to TCC.[20]

Welfare agencies in the states of Pennsylvania and Washington also stress that outreach begins with staff training and education. In Pennsylvania, the state agency shows all caseworkers a training video designed to communicate the importance of TCC in their clients' lives. According to a report co-written by the Children's Defense Fund and the Center for Law and Social Policy,

> Every state should develop a worker training program that does the following: reviews eligibility for TCC; describes standard procedures for formal notification and personalized outreach; describes and discusses at length why day care is important to families . . . ; describes the request approval process; outlines child care resources and referral services; and details the payment mechanisms, the amounts of assistance that can be provided, and the implications of choosing different payment mechanisms.[21]

Several players in the child care arena suggest that public assistance caseworkers can, at times, be hostile toward extending benefits to clients, because often these public employees earn little more than some of their clients and are not eligible for subsidized child care.[22] By educating and training AFDC caseworkers, hostilities can diminish as workers more clearly understand the rationale behind Transitional Child Care and its potential to decrease their caseload.

Furthermore, in Monroe County, education extends to all administrative staff, and there is "a strong recognition throughout the agency of the importance of child care to employed parents. This recognition is accompanied by a commitment to helping parents maintain employment which begins at the highest administrative levels and has been effectively communicated to all agency staff."[23] Similar education should also extend to outside agencies and child care providers who often have more contact with clients than public assistance workers.

The aforementioned policies and processes currently in use in other states and localities may apply to New York City's TCC program. Some might be more viable in a modified format that considers the larger numbers served through the Work Related Benefits Unit. These successful efforts show that enhancing the quality of services and number of clients is possible. With

streamlined processes and more effective marketing, select programs nationwide have been able to increase TCC use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations for action fall into two categories, those for immediate consideration and those for long-term consideration.

FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

Based on our research findings, we have developed five recommendations for immediate consideration.

IMPROVE MAILING LIST

To begin, the Work Related Benefits Unit currently receives the names and addresses of all cases closed for employment reasons, as well as some that are ineligible because their youngest child is 13 years or older. We recommend that the office that generates this list delete all cases in which the youngest child is age 13 or older, rendering the family ineligible. This deletion reduces the number of applications the Work Related Benefits Unit must send out, automatically saving time and money on copies and postage, and more accurately reporting the response rate.

PROVIDE INCOME SUPPORT TRAINING

Next, we recommend providing regular in-service training to Income Support staff to make them more fully aware of Transitional Child Care's features and benefits. To determine the effectiveness of this training on increasing the application rate, the Work Related Benefits Unit could select one Income Support site at which to begin intensive training and subsequently determine how training impacts application rates. If these effects are positive, the training program could expand to all HRA Income Support sites.

GIVE INFORMATION & APPLICATION TO AFDC CLIENTS

Third, based on our survey analysis and case closing findings, we recommend supplying information on TCC to AFDC clients at their first

recertification. Within our sample, less than one percent of cases closed before reaching recertification, so this effort would ensure that nearly all clients know about the Transitional Child Care program and its benefits. Moreover, Income Support should give the TCC applications at case closing to those whose cases close for employment reasons. Not only would this decrease the time between case closure and application to TCC, but it would also reduce costs and ensure that eligible clients receive an application.

SEND BILINGUAL APPLICATION

Fourth, the Work Related Benefits Unit currently has applications available in Spanish but does not make use of them. We recommend that these be distributed in all application mailings. To test the effectiveness, over a two month period, the Work Related Benefits Unit could select one- third to one-half of those on the list it receives of cases closed for employment reasons. These randomly selected cases would be sent a bilingual application packet and the other cases would receive the standard, English-only application and information. A comparison of the application rates from these two groups would determine whether sending a bilingual application increases the application rate.

INCREASE INTERNAL MARKETING

Fifth, increasing internal marketing might be the most effective way of increasing the application rate. From our research, Income Support staff seemed supportive of BEGIN benefits, so we assume they also would promote Transitional Child Care, if they had information on the program. The Work Related Benefits Unit has information available but needs to make better use of it for internal marketing purposes. In addition to posting flyers around its own office, the Work Related Benefits Unit should ensure that all Income Support sites post flyers and that all Eligibility Specialists receive up-to-date information on the program. Additional internal marketing efforts might include instituting an incentive structure, recognizing the teams of Income Support workers with the most referrals to Transitional Child Care.

FOR LONG-TERM CONSIDERATION

We have four recommendations for long-term consideration.

SIMPLIFY APPLICATION PROCESS

First, we recommend simplifying the application process. If the application form were shorter, application rates might increase. Under the Family Support Act of 1988, federal regulations mandate that there must be an application for Transitional Child Care, but other states have received waivers to eliminate or minimize it. HRA should investigate how to simplify its application for Transitional Chid Care in order to reduce work for potential clients as well as for TCC Eligibility Specialists.

RECONSIDER TIMING OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Related to the application process, our second long-term recommendation is to reconsider the timing of eligibility determination. The earlier eligibility can be determined, the higher a client's chances are of receiving Transitional Child Care. To make this policy change, officials should examine the current system to identify the most appropriate and earliest point at which to approve clients for Transitional Child Care.

DEVELOP WORKSHOPS FOR AFDC CLIENTS

In addition, Office of Employment Services should develop for AFDC clients workshops which would cover all benefits available to them in their transition from welfare to work. OES has recently begun offering similar workshops for BEGIN participants, but workshops for all AFDC clients on transitional support programs might help increase Transitional Child Care's application rate.

STREAMLINE SERVICE DELIVERY

Finally, HRA should consider streamlining its service delivery process by changing the boundaries of responsibility for Eligibility Specialists and restructuring the way in which Eligibility Specialists deliver benefits. In a streamlined system, one person would administer both AFDC and transitional benefits. To make this change, we recommend that HRA conduct additional research on other urban TCC programs. We also suggest undertaking a quasi-experimental evaluation of the effectiveness of administering benefits in a streamlined system. This would involve selecting two sites, for example, in which to institute the change. Then the outcomes at test sites could be compared to the *status quo*.

In sum, we believe that effective change takes place gradually and deliberately. With most of our recommendations, particularly the major policy changes, it is important first to test whether they have the desired impact on increasing participation in Transitional Child Care before implementing them system-wide.

CONCLUSION

After making recommendations to increase the application rate, we return to our original question: Why do only 20 percent of those sent an application for Transitional Child Care in New York City return it?

Our answers fall into two categories. First, existing structural barriers prohibit people from applying. These barriers may include lack of communication among HRA departments, and application and information flow to clients. Second, personal barriers affect whether or not clients return the application. Personal barriers include language, education, and individual situations.

Since the Family Support Act mandated Transitional Child Care seven years ago, Congress continues to make efforts to reform welfare programs. Transitional benefits were mandated in order to help keep parents employed when they leave AFDC for work. To have a meaningful impact on helping families, people must be informed about support programs such as Transitional Child Care. [24] Considering calls for sweeping welfare reform and pressures for more effective programs, it is important to continue studying and learning about options available to families seeking financial independence, in order to improve these programs and help make them work.

ENDNOTES

1. Polakow, Valerie. "Welfare Reform and the Assault on Daily Life: Targeting Single Mothers and their Children." *Social Justice*: Spring 1994, 30.

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4. "An Agenda for Change at the Human Resources Administration." New York City Citizen's Budget Commission, New York: January 1994, 9-15.

4. Loprest, Pamela J. and Douglas A. Wissoker. "The Effect of Transitional Child Care and Medical Benefits on Post-Welfare Success: Evidence from Two States." Working Paper, The Urban Institute: February 1995, 19.

5. *ibid.*, 19.

6. Income Support staff member. Personal Interview: March 1995. Due to the confidentiality of our interviews, no quotes will be associated with a particular person nor will we list the names of those we interviewed.

7. Loprest and Wissoker, 9.

8. Biggs, Bill. Single Parent Employment Program, Salt Lake City, Utah. Telephone Interview: February 1995.

9. Shadbolt, Larry, Program Analyst. Income Maintenance, Department of Human Resources, Salem, Oregon. Telephone Interview: February 1995.

10. Bainbridge, Jay. Child Care Action Campaign, New York, New York. Personal Interview: March 1995.

11. *ibid.*

12. "Local Commissioners Memorandum, TCC: Practices to Increase Utilization." Services and Community Development Division, New York State Department of Social Services: October 1994, 1-2.

13. "Local Commissioners Memorandum," 3-4.

14. "Transitional Child Care: State Experiences and Emerging Policies Under the Family Support Act." Children's Defense Fund, Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC: 1990, 14.

15. "Local Commissioners Memorandum," 5.

16. "Transitional Child Care: State Experiences," 9.

17. "Local Commissioners Memorandum," 3.

18. "Transitional Child Care: State Experiences," 9.

19. *ibid.*, 8.

20. "Local Commissioners Memorandum," 2.

21. "Transitional Child Care: State Experiences," 10-11.

22. Bainbridge, Jay. This point is also substantiated by our Income Support staff interviews.

23. "Local Commissioners Memorandum," 2.

24. Loprest and Wissoker state emphatically that "awareness of the existence of benefits is a prerequisite for benefitting from them," 7.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

This Appendix includes detailed information on how we handled the data available from HRA's computer database and how we selected our sample.

Decision rules used to record data HRA administrative files:

1. We collected initial data from HRA administrative records based on the case files of AFDC families in NYC who left AFDC in August or October of 1994. The data files contained information that the Work Related Benefits Unit (WRBU) receives on a weekly basis, the "winrow" lists. Each week, this list details for the WRBU those families who left AFDC for employment and are eligible for TCC. These individuals are then sent a TCC application and information packet.
2. The months of August and October 1994 were selected for the following reasons. Prior to this study, WRBU had surveyed some of the potential applicants who had left in the spring, to collect additional data on why people had not applied for TCC. The decision was made to not resurvey these months. Second, based on the months that the workshop project was to cover, we decided that the months of August and October 1994 were convenient to use for the purpose of the study. Third, we decided that these months would be close enough in time to the planned survey distribution date (January 1995) to maximize the chance that people would remember both receiving the TCC application and their impressions of the application.

   It is possible that seasonality would affect applications received for participation in the TCC program. There are no reasons to suspect that at this point. However, if there were seasonality, it is possible it would be related to the starting of the school year (September) and so may affect either or both of the months of August or October.
3. Three full weeks of data were collected in both August and October 1994. These three weeks were selected to cover people who left AFDC in that month, not at the end of a prior month. All cases falling within these three weeks were recorded. Cases with possible problems were recorded and marked, and often deleted late in the process. Details on this follow.
4. Cases in which there were adults but no children (technically these should not have been AFDC cases) and cases with children 13 and over were recorded. These cases were then deleted for the purpose of pulling our sample.
5. For the purpose of our study, unborn children, often listed with last name and anticipated birth date, were not included as children, as they were not yet a factor in child care costs.
6. Many cases seemed to have multiple listings of children and adults. We used our best judgment to determine the number of children on the case. For example, two children with the same date of birth and almost identical names were considered to be one child, on the assumption that the data was documented incorrectly. Two children with the same date of birth and similar or different names, or with different genders, were considered twins. We assumed that gender was more likely to be correct than the spelling of a name in determine the nature of family structure. Two children with the same date of birth and the same first name, with different last names, were considered one child.

7. Many of the families had more than two generations living in the household or listed on the case, so we attempted to determine some family relationships, *e.g.* who was the parent and who was the child. We tried to determine this based on the relationship to the case head. If the head of the case had both adult and young children, the adult children were counted as children. If the head of the case was living with people over the age of 21 who may have been his or her siblings or parents, these people were counted as adults.

Decisions rules used in pulling the sample from HRA records:

1. The sample was drawn from the approximately 1000 HRA administrative records that were collected, and was based on the case files of AFDC families in NYC who left AFDC in August or October of 1994. The data files were based on what the WRBU receives on a weekly basis, the "winrow" lists. Each week, this list details for the WRBU those families who left AFDC for employment and who were therefore determined to be eligible for TCC. All of these individuals (with the exception of people in drug treatment) are then sent an application and information packet for TCC.
2. For each week, we removed the records of cases that did not have children. We were not sure why these cases were listed as receiving AFDC. Deleting these cases left us with a total of 999 cases.
3. For each week of data, we then sorted out all of the cases where the youngest child was age 13 or over. We did this by using the dates August 1981 and October 1981 as a guideline. There were 131 of these cases, or 13.1 percent of the total number of cases with children. Three percent of these cases actually did return the TCC application. We cannot say anything about this small number of cases.
4. 868 cases included children under 13 years of age, and we divided these cases into those who did and those who did not return their TCC applications. There were 175 cases that did return their applications (20 percent) and 693 cases that did not return their applications (80 percent).
5. A desirable sample size was determined to be between 100 and 120 cases for the purpose of sending out a mail survey. We wanted the sample composed of about half people who did apply for TCC and half people who did not.

   We used the random number generation function in EXCEL to generate a random number by which to pick our sample. For people who did return the application, we needed a pool of about 50 cases out of the total of 175 cases (therefore, we needed every third case). We generated and started case selection with the random number two, for a total of 58 cases in our sample. This overrepresents the number of cases of people who returned the survey. This is necessary because of the small percentage that returns the application.
6. For people who did not return the application, we needed a pool of about 50 cases out of the total of 693 cases (therefore, we selected every thirteenth case). We generated and started case selection with the random number six, for a total of 53 cases. One of these cases was incorrectly included in the sample pool because the youngest child was over age 13. This case was immediately eliminated from the sample.
7. Our final sample included 58 cases that had applied for TCC and 52 cases that had not applied.

APPENDIX B

This Appendix includes the cover letter and survey sent for this research project to the sample of 110 cases that closed for employment.

Welfare Dynamics Project
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University
4 Washington Square North
New York, NY 10012

February 2, 1995

Dear Madam or Sir,

You have been selected to participate in a short survey. A research team from New York University is studying the use of child care among former recipients of AFDC. The questions should about ten minutes to complete. Completing this survey will not cost you anything. In fact, we will send a Burger King gift certificate to the first 100 people who return the survey! We have enclosed a postage paid envelope to make it as easy as possible for you to return the survey.

Your answers are confidential and will not affect any public assistance you may be receiving or your eligibility for any programs. No one at the Human Resources Administration will see your answers or even know that you filled out the survey. We are just interested in learning a bit more about your needs for and use of child care.

If you do not send the survey back, we may call you to conduct the survey over the phone. If you have questions about the survey or would like to complete it over the phone, call Laura Peck at (212) 529-9093. If you want to know more about the project or the research team feel free to call as well.

We appreciate your help with our project.

Sincerely,

Laura Peck
Laura Peck

Gabrielle Gerhard
Gabrielle Gerhard

Nancy Fox
Nancy Fox

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

survey # ____

Instructions - Please answer all the questions in this survey to help a team of researchers who are studying child care use. Note that your name is not recorded. Therefore all information will remain strictly confidential and be used for research purposes only.

Part One - First we want to learn about how you left AFDC and your child care situation.

1) How would you describe your experiences with the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) and its Income Support offices and case workers?

circle one: very positive somewhat positive somewhat negative very negative

2) When you left AFDC, which of the following describes your feelings?

mark all that apply:

- ☐ I was nervous about leaving AFDC
- ☐ I was excited about my job
- ☐ I was glad to leave AFDC
- ☐ I was worried about finding child care
- ☐ I was worried about paying for child care
- ☐ I was confident about meeting the needs of my family and my children
- ☐ I was worried about meeting the needs of my family and my children
- ☐ I was determined to keep my job
- ☐ I was reassured because I knew I could go back on AFDC if I had to

3) Are you still working? *circle one:* yes no

If yes, how many hours per week? _____

4) How do you agree with this statement: "Finding child care was very easy"

circle one: strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

5) Given your finances and personal situation, how would you categorize the cost of your child care?

circle one: very inexpensive inexpensive expensive very expensive

How much per week do you spend on child care? $ _____ per week

6) How would you describe your overall child care situation?
(this includes location, quality, etc.)

circle one: excellent good fair poor

7) Would you change your child care situation if you could? *circle one:* yes no

If yes, why? _____

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7) When I am at work, my child/children are usually cared for

mark the one that describes your situation best:

- ☐ in my home, by a relative, friend or someone who is an unlicensed care provider
- ☐ in a relative's home, by a relative
- ☐ in my home, by a licensed child care provider
- ☐ in someone else's home, by an unlicensed child care provider
- ☐ in someone else's home, by a licensed child care provider
- ☐ in a day care center
- ☐ other *please specify*: _____

9) Please fill in the box below with information on the people that live with you. (This means they have no other permanent residence).

name	gender	age	relation to you

please continue on back, if necessary

10) What is your gross income? $ _____ _____
(total before taxes)

- ☐ per week
- ☐ every two weeks
- ☐ per month
- ☐ per year

11) What is your household income? $ _____
(total income before taxes of all the people that live with you)

- ☐ per week
- ☐ every two weeks
- ☐ per month
- ☐ per year

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When you left AFDC, HRA sent you information on their Transitional Child Care program. Transitional Child Care helps pay for child care expenses. The following questions deal with the application for this program.

12) I received an application in the mail for Transitional Child Care. *circle one:* yes no
(If yes, please continue with Questions 13-18)
(If no, please go to Question 20 on the next page)

Please use this scale to answer the questions below:	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
13) I found the application easy to read.	1	2	3	4
14) The application was easy to fill out.	1	2	3	4
15) I had all the information available to fill it out.	1	2	3	4
16) I had heard about Transitional Child Care program before getting the application in the mail.	1	2	3	4
17) I understood all the information I received on the Transitional Child Care program.	1	2	3	4

18) I returned the application. *circle one:* yes no
(If yes, please go to Question 20 on the next page)
(If no, please continue with Question 19)

19) Why didn't you return the application? *mark all that apply:*

- ☐ My child is too old for child care. *please note age:* _____ years old
- ☐ My child cares for himself or herself
- ☐ My child has an older brother or sister who watches him or her
- ☐ My child care provider would not give me the information that the form asked for
- ☐ My child participates in after school activities
- ☐ My child is in a city ACD center
- ☐ An adult relative or friend watches my child
- ☐ I didn't think I would get enough money to make it worth it
- ☐ It looked like it would take too much work to fill out the application
- ☐ I am no longer working
- ☐ I am back on public assistance
- ☐ Other reason *please specify:*_____

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Part Three. Finally, we would like some information on you.

20) What is your birthdate? *month / day / year:* ___/___/___

21) What is your gender? *circle one:* male female

22) How do you classify your race? ___ Black ___ Hispanic ___ Asian/Pacific
___ White ___ American Indian or Alaskan
___ Other *specify:* _____

23) What is your primary language? ☐ English
☐ Spanish
☐ Other *specify:* _____

24) What is the highest level of school you have attended?

circle one: some grade school (K-8) finished grade school

some high school (9-12) finished high school/GED

some college finished college

25) Have you participated in vocational training or attended job training classes?

circle one: yes no

If yes, was it as a part of a JOBS or a BEGIN program? *circle one:* yes no

26) Do you have other comments about things you like or don't like about your child care or about the HRA Transitional Child Care program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your name will not be connected in any way with your answers. We will use the coded number of this survey to return your Burger King gift certificate to you.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return this survey to:

Policy Capstone Project
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University
4 Washington Square North
New York, NY 10012

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APPENDIX C

This Appendix includes the following materials produced or sent by the Work Related Benefits Unit:

- Two Transitional Child Care brochures (one page each)
- The letter sent to all cases closed for employment (one page)
- The cover letter to the TCC application (one page)
- The application forms (four pages)
- For rapid service form, sent with TCC application (one page)

********* NOTE: These items remain the property of the Work Related Benefits Unit and are not included with this copy of the paper. *********